

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1, 4, 7, 12, 14 and 19 as follows. The changes in these claims from their immediate prior version are shown with ~~strikethrough~~ or [[double brackets]] for deleted matter and underlines for added matter. A complete listing of the claims with proper claims identifiers follows.

1. (Currently amended) A method of forming a sugarless coating on chewing gum cores comprising:

- a) providing chewing gum cores;
- b) providing a coating syrup comprising one or more sugarless sweeteners;
- c) providing a dusting mix comprising about 20% to about 60% of a bulk sweetener selected from the group consisting of ~~malitol~~ maltitol, hydrogenated isomaltulose, lactitol, sorbitol and mixtures thereof and about 40% to about 80% filler;
- d) applying a plurality of layers of the coating syrup and a plurality of layers of the dusting mix to the chewing gum cores to form a sugarless coating on the gum cores.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the coating syrup and dusting mix are applied alternatingly for at least 12 coating operations.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the filler comprises between about 45% and about 55% of the dusting mix.

4. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the dusting mix comprises about 50% filler and about 50% ~~malitol~~ maltitol.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the coating comprises between about 5% and about 10% filler.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the coating comprises about 6% to about 7% filler.

7. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the syrup comprises between about 30% and about 80% of a sugarless sweetener selected from the group consisting of ~~malitol~~ maltitol, sorbitol, hydrogenated isomaltulose and lactitol.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the syrup further comprises between about 1% and about 12% of a gum selected from the group consisting of gum arabic, gum talha and mixtures thereof.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the filler is selected from the group consisting of calcium carbonate, magnesium carbonate, talc, ground limestone, magnesium silicates, aluminum silicates, titanium dioxide, mono-, di-, and tricalcium phosphates, cellulose polymers and combinations thereof.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the filler comprises calcium carbonate.

11. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of providing flavor and applying the flavor so as to be incorporated into the coating on the gum cores.

12. (Currently amended) The method of claim 11 wherein the flavor is added between application of the coating syrup; and no dusting mix is applied between the applications of coating syrup just before and just after the flavor is applied.

13. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein first and second different coating syrups are provided and the different coating syrups are used at different times in the coating operation.

14. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the coating syrup comprises a high maltitol content syrup wherein over 80% of the solids in the syrup are maltitol.

15. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the coating further comprises a high-intensity sweetener.

16. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the coating syrup comprises a high-intensity sweetener.

17. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the coating comprises a hard shell coating.

18. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the chewing gum cores have a pellet shape with corners and the coating has a strength sufficient to prevent the corners from chipping during normal manufacturing and distribution of the coated pellets.

19. (Currently amended) A method of forming a sugarless coating on chewing gum cores comprising:

- a) providing chewing gum cores;
- b) providing a coating syrup comprising maltitol;
- c) providing a dusting mix comprising about 45% to about 55% maltitol and about 45% to about 55% calcium carbonate;
- d) applying a plurality of layers of the coating syrup and a plurality of layers of the dusting mix to the chewing gum cores to form a sugarless coating on the gum cores.